

Capsule Summary
SM-594
New Theater
Leonardtown
Private

c. late-1940's, early-1950's

In the post-World War II period, Leonardtown became the entertainment and recreational center for all of St. Mary's County. In the 1940's the town boasted two bowling alleys (SM-589 and SM 532), a movie theater (SM-566), and several hotels including the Union Hotel (SM-545). In the mid-1940's, however, a section of the Union Hotel burned to the ground. While part of the building was preserved, the other section was completely demolished and in the late-1940's or early-1950's a new movie theater was built in its stead. Called the "New Theater" by locals, the building confirmed the high demand for motion picture entertainment.

Like the St. Mary's Theater (SM-566), the New Theater was constructed of cinder blocks supported by brick buttresses that permitted the walls to reach a more elevated height. While the front of the theater has been drastically changed, the actual theater space has been preserved. It can seat approximately three hundred people and is currently used as a church, concert hall, and site for other cultural events.

In 1945, the New Theater parcel was purchased by Paul J. and Virginia C. Bailey from Nora Love. In 1950 the Baileys sold the property to Kenneth B. and Lorraine H. Duke and Jack and Goluem K. Fruchtman. It was not until 1951, however, that the property was owned by St. Mary's Theater, Inc. In 1961 New Theater Building Incorporated purchased the property and managed the theater until the 1980's when it no longer showed movies. While the building has been drastically changed since it was initially opened, the building retains its integrity of setting

Capsule Summary
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(Page 2)

and overall feeling.

SM-594, New Theater
St. Mary's County
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization:

Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period:

Break With the Past, 1930-present

Historic Period Theme:

Architecture
Commerce
Social/Cultural/Recreational

Resource Type

Category:

Building

Historic Environment:

Town

Historic Function and Use:

Movie Theater

Known Design Source:

None

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-594

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic New Theater

and/or common

2. Location

Just N of intersection of Park Avenue & Washington Street, on W side of Washington Street
street & number ☐ not for publication

city, town Leonardtown ☐ vicinity of congressional district 3

state Maryland county St. Mary's TM 133, P 305

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Leroy and Evelyn Van Housen and Leonard and Florence C. Kessler

street & number Rt 2 Box 30-C1 telephone no.: 301-475-3020

city, town Leonardtown state and zip code Md 20650

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse liber MRB 301

street & number folio 136

city, town Leonardtown state Md

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. SM-594

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Contributing Resource Count: 1

The New Theater is located on the west side of Washington Street near the intersection of Washington Street and Park Avenue in Leonardtown, Maryland. The theater is oriented on an east-west axis and the building is situated on a narrow town lot that extends approximately 200 feet back from the road. The building is bounded by the Union Hotel (SM-545) on the north, a CVS Pharmacy on the south, Washington Street on the east, and a parking lot and alley on the west.

The New Theater itself is a one story building constructed of cinder blocks supported by a series of brick buttresses. The theater features a flat roof that gradually descends towards the west.

The primary or east elevation features a two story facade. The first floor consists of a series of picture windows with metal frames, two pairs of doors, and a bay window. Each set of doors permits entry into separate interior spaces. The south set of doors is constructed of plate glass set into metal frames, but are used only as a fire escape. The north set of doors are also constructed of plate glass set into metal frames. These, however, form the primary entrance. Immediately to the south of the primary entrance is a three sided bay window. Each side of the bay features a plate glass window. The south bays are shaded by a metal awning, while the north bays are shaded by the original metal, movie marquee. Immediately above the awning and marquee are five, one-over-one, double-hung windows with decorative louvered shutters. The wall area surrounding the windows is constructed of a modern brick veneer that changes to a darker red color just above the window lintels. The top of the wall features a stepped brick parapet.

The north and south sides of the theater features a series of brick buttresses that support the cinder block walls. On the south elevation is a side door entry or fire exit.

The front section of the interior has been changed into a lunch counter and restaurant. It once featured as a ticket purchasing booth and a concession stand for the theater. The interior of the theater remains intact and can still seat approximately 300 people. The theater is currently used as a church, concert hall for folk music bands, and used for other large cultural events.

8. Significance

Survey No. SM-594

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

In the post-World War II period, Leonardtown became the entertainment and recreational center for all of St. Mary's County. In the 1940s the town boasted two bowling alleys (SM-589 and SM-532), a movie theater (SM-566), and several hotels including the Union Hotel (SM-545). In the mid-1940s, however, a section of the Union Hotel burned to the ground. While part of the building was preserved, the other section was completely demolished and in the late-1940s or early-1950s a new movie theater was built in its stead. Called the "New Theater" by locals, the building confirmed the high demand for motion picture entertainment.

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In 1945, the New Theater parcel was purchased by Paul J. and Virginia C. Bailey from Nora Love. In 1950 the Baileys sold the property to Kenneth B. and Lorraine H. Duke and Jack and Goluem K. Fruchtmann. It was not until 1951, however, that the property was owned by St. Mary's Theater, Inc. In 1961 New Theater Building Incorporated purchased the property and managed the theater until the 1980s when it no longer showed movies. While the building has been drastically changed since it was initially opened, the building retains much of its integrity of setting and overall feeling.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM-594

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .317 acresQuadrangle name Leonardtown, MdQuadrangle scale 1:24 000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

Zone	Easting			Northing					

B

Zone	Easting			Northing					

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Same as per deed description.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk E. Ranzetta, Historic Sites Surveyororganization St. Mary's County Dept. of Planning & Zoningdate June 9, 1997street & number 22740 Washington Streettelephone 301-475-4662city or town Leonardtownstate Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2022
514-7600

SM-594, New Theater

St. Mary's County

8.1 Significance

Chain-of-Title

(All deeds are located at the Land Records Office, St. Mary's County Courthouse, Leonardtown, Maryland unless otherwise noted.)

Reference: Liber MRB 301, Folio 136

Grantee: Leroy and Evelyn Van Housen and Leonard and Florence Kessler

Grantor: Marvin S. Kaminetz

Date: March 11, 1986

Notes: The tract consists of .317 acres. The theater is purchased by the Van Housen's and Kessler's at a public sale. The property was foreclosed upon according to case #CA 85-1083.

Reference: Liber MRB 155, Folio 280

Grantee: Jack and Juanita Lewis

Grantor: New Theater Building, Inc.

Date: September 1, 1983

Reference: Liber CBG 97, Folio 522

Grantee: New Theater Building, Inc.

Grantor: St. Mary's Theater, Inc.

Date: October 16, 1961

Reference: Liber CBG 30, Folio 205

Grantee: St. Mary's Theater, Inc.

Grantor: William Aleck Loker, et al

Date: April 10, 1951

Notes: The deed references a plat of the property made by George W. Joy, Jr. on November 30, 1945--the plat could not be located.

Reference: Liber CBG 26, Folio 423

Grantee: Kenneth B. and Lorraine H. Duke, Jack and Goluem K. Fruchtman

Grantor: Paul J. and Virginia C. Bailey

Date: September 29, 1950

Notes: The Bailey's sell their 1/2 interest in the property to the Dukes and Fruchtmans. This deed also notes that the grantors as well as Wm. Aleck and Margaret W. Loker received the property from a series of deeds by J. Gregory Nuthall and Nora Love to obtain the free and clear ownership of the property.

Reference: Liber CBG 16, Folio 384

Grantee: William A. and Margaret W. Loker and Paul J. and Virginia C. Bailey

Grantor: Nora and A. Kingsley Love

Date: October 18, 1944

Notes: Here the property is referred to as the Hotel Lawrence Property and Nuthall's Store House. Soon after this deed, part of the hotel burned causing a subdivision of the property and the construction of the New Theater. To see the complete chain-of-title for the Union Hotel property see SM-545.

SM-594, The New Theater
St. Mary's County
8.2 Significance

Deed Reference: Liber JMM 3, Folio 35
Grantee: Nora Love
Grantor: J. Allan Coad
Date: February 19, 1925

Deed Reference: Liber JMM 2, Folio 488
Grantee: J. Allan Coad
Grantor: L. Allison Wilmer, trustee
Date: December 16, 1924

Notes: The previous owner, Philip J. Hayden, went bankrupt (No 4294 Bankrupt Docket P) and as a result was sold on the courthouse steps in Leonardtown on September 23, 1924 for \$5000.

Deed Reference: Liber EBA 20, Folio 494
Grantee: Philip J. Hayden
Grantor: H. Webster and Elsie M. Foxwell
Date: May 2, 1922

Deed Reference: Liber EBA 17, Folio 119
Grantee: H. Webster and Elsie M. Foxwell
Grantor: L. Allison Wilmer and Joseph H. Ching, trustees
Date: May 15, 1918

Notes: In 1918, Asa Lawrence died in testate. As a result, Frank D. Lawrence had to settle his estate (Equity Case #1275, NE). The property was subsequently sold to Foxwell to pay off Lawrence's debts. This deed refers to the property as called "The Union Hotel Property", "Fenwick Hotel Property", and the "Hotel Lawrence Lot."

Deed Reference: Liber EBA 5, Folio 94
Grantee: Asa A. Lawrence
Grantor: L. Ernest Payne
Date: July 12, 1905

Deed Reference: Liber EBA 5, Folio 43
Grantee: L. Ernest Payne
Grantor: Asa A. Lawrence
Date: May 25, 1905

Deed Reference: Liber JJG 5, Folio 250
Grantee: Asa A. Lawrence
Grantor: Joseph H. Ching, trustee
Date: June 23, 1898

Deed Reference: Liber JFF 10, Folio 9
Grantee: John F. Ching
Grantor: Robert C. Combs
Date: November 24, 1887

Notes: In an equity case involving the Ann M. Combs and Charlotte C. McSherry vs. Ellen Rebecca Fenwick, the court resolves to sell the property.

SM-594, The New Theater

St. Mary's County

8.3 Significance

Deed Reference: Decree Record Liber JFF 6, Folio 1, St. Mary's County Land Records

Plaintiffs--Ann M. Combs and Charlotte C. McSherry

Defendants--Ellen R. Fenwick and J. Simms Fenwick

Date: 1887

Notes: In an effort to settle the estate of John F. Fenwick, the court orders the sale of the property. It refers to the property as the "Union Hotel Lot" at the Northwest corner of Washington and Fenwick Streets containing about one acre.

Deed Reference: Liber JFF 4, Folio 30

Grantee: John F. Fenwick

Grantor: Benjamin G. and Martha E. Harris

Date: October 21, 1879

Notes: The Harris' sell the property to Fenwick for \$7,500. The sale includes "all the stables and outbuildings thereto attached also a small lot and office adjoining the said hotel and now occupied by Dr. A. J. Spalding."

(Related transactions)

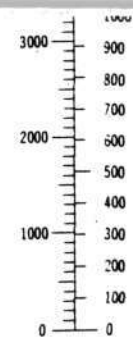
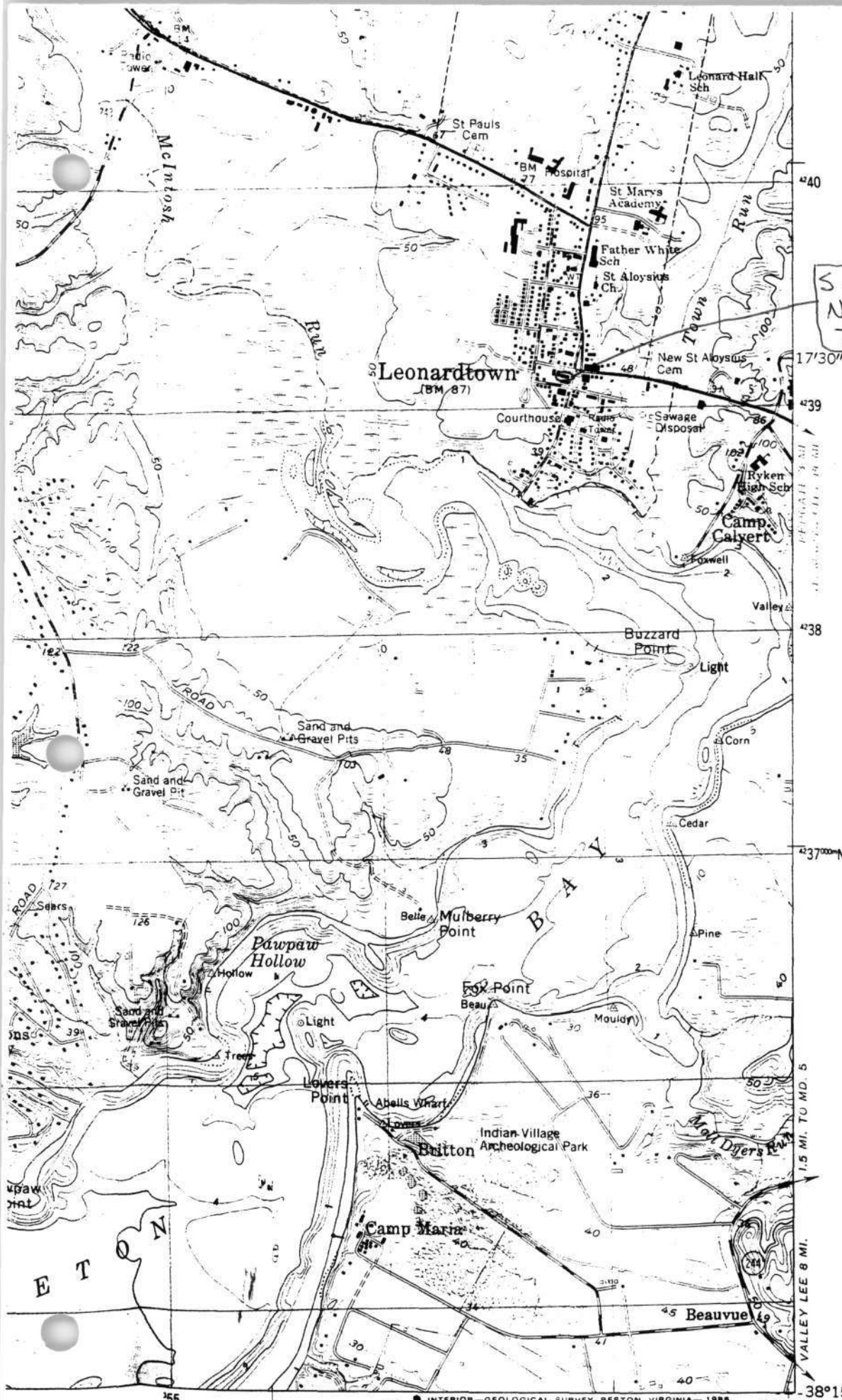
Deed Reference: (Mortgage) Folio JJG 3, Folio 344

Grantee: Asa A. and Anna G. Lawrence

Grantor: Wilber F. Nash

Date: 1890s

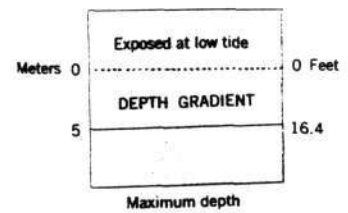
Notes: In this mortgage Lawrence agrees to pay Nash \$1000 by a certain date. He also sells Nash the following items from the Union Hotel: 1 upright piano, 1 parlor table, one large plate glass mirror, one bronze clock and ornament, two sofas, one bed lounge, one walnut book case, two upholstered easy chairs, four walnut chamber sets--each consisting of bedstead, marble-top bureau and wash stand, one walnut extension table, one walnut side-board, one walnut Hall rod.



SM-594
New Theater

Feet	Meters
1	.3048
2	.6096
3	.9144
4	1.2192
5	1.5240
6	1.8288
7	2.1336
8	2.4384
9	2.7432
10	3.0480

To convert feet to meters
multiply by .3048
To convert meters to feet
multiply by 3.2808



LEONARDTOWN, MD.
SW/4 LEONARDTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE
38076-C6-TB-024

1963
BATHYMETRY ADDED 1982
PHOTOREVISED 1984
DMA 5660 I SW SERIES V833

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1988

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

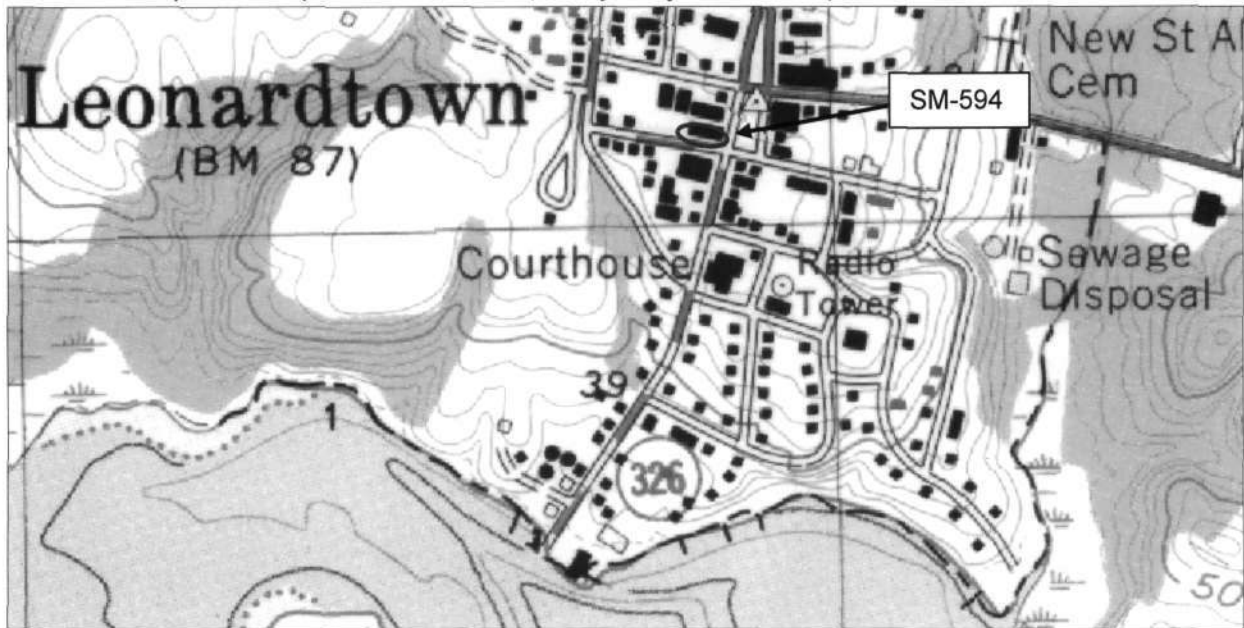
(PIN-Y PC
5660 I)

SM-594

New Theater

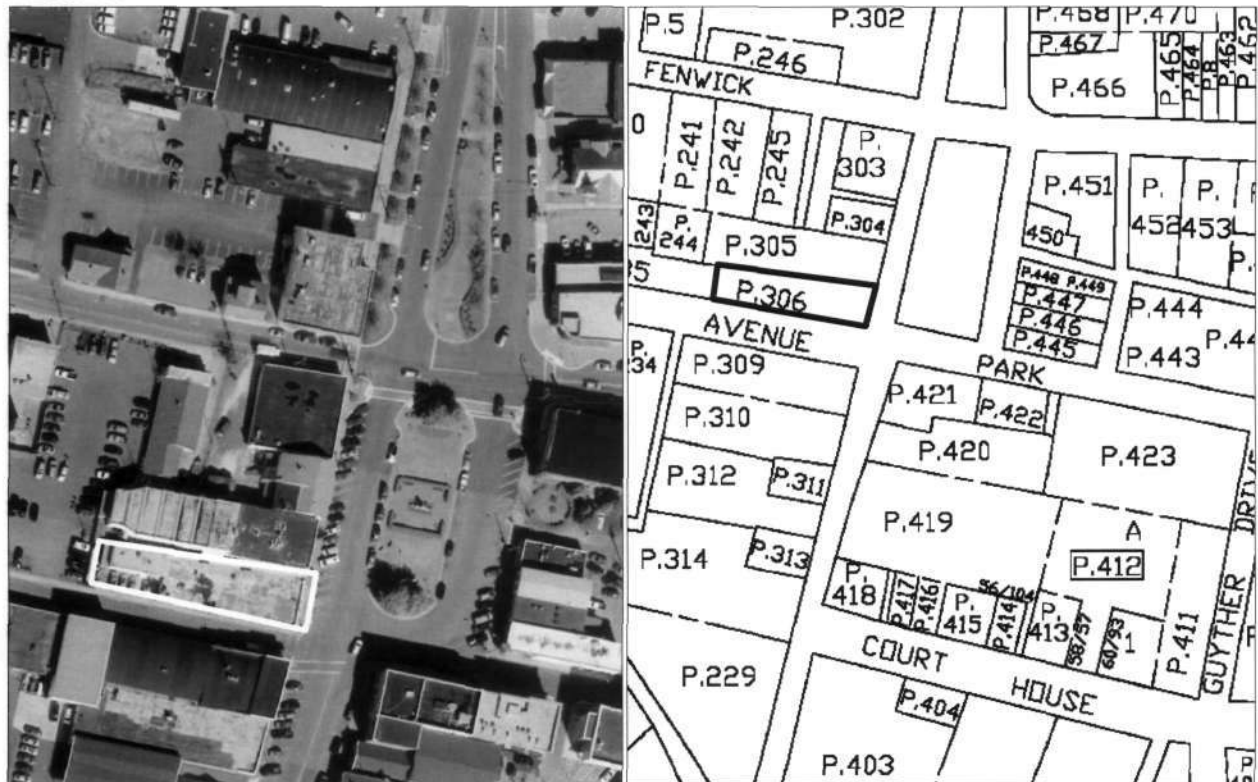
22685 Washington Street (MD 326), Leonardtown

Leonardtown quad 1963 (Photorevised 1984, Bathymetry added 1982)



National Web Map Service 6" Orthophoto Map,
c. 2007-08

Tax Map 133, P. 306





SM-594
New Theater

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

May 1997

Md SHPO

E elevation

1 of 1